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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9898
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: UNAMID SOFA: AGREED BUT NOT YET SIGNED

¶1. (SBU) The UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the Government of Sudan have finalized language for a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), Joint Special Representative (JSR) Rodolphe Adada's Special Assistant, Rana Taha, told Poloff on February 6. Adada and Foreign Minister Deng Alor were scheduled to sign the SOFA on February 6, but the ceremony was postponed to February 10 because Alor is traveling in the region. Taha said that both New York and Addis Ababa were comfortable with the SOFA text at present--which guarantees "unhindered access"--but is concerned that Khartoum may request additional changes in the days prior to the signing. Progress on a SOFA, if indeed implemented, would constitute a major step forward in UNAMID deployment.

¶2. (SBU) UNAMID has decided to delay detailed discussions on night flights, customs procedures, and land purchases until the SOFA is signed. UNAMID interprets the current text as permitting night flights and requiring expeditious customs processing, Taha explained, but technical issues, such as runway upgrades at airports in Darfur, will proceed after the SOFA is "sealed."

¶3. (SBU) Comment: It strikes us as a very risky strategy not to nail down the details of night flights and other issues in the SOFA agreement, given that the GOS almost certain to use any excuse to limit or manipulate UNAMID activities, but the current agreement appears to be the best the UN can achieve for now. UNAMID is presumably banking on the UN and the broader international community pressuring or cajoling the GOS if it does not allow UNAMID the unhindered access it has supposedly agreed to. It will be important to hold the GOS to this agreement, if indeed it holds, and most importantly, to a broad interpretation of the SOFA which enables UNAMID to do its work.

FERNANDEZ